Reflection Essay

Multimedia in the Classroom

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Making Multimedia Meaningful

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In society today technology plays a huge role within not only students’ education within the classroom but outside in their every day lives as well. With this being said, every school is different and due to this so is the amount of technology that is incorporated in students learning. This can be viewed from either a positive or negative light depending on one’s point of view on multimedia resources.

From my own personal perspective and experience with the use of technology in the classroom, I believe it is a wonderful thing that can truly get students thinking and working in a way that was not available to students years ago. Technology allows students to take their understandings of reading, writing, mathematics, history, culture and science and explore and develop it in a whole new method! It allows students to share, explore and create in a fun and unique way based on their personal desires and ideas. Advances in multimedia resources allow students to stay connected with their learning in and outside the classroom doors.

A great example of incorporating technology into the classroom would be the reading series, *Reading Street* by Pearson Scott Foresman, which is designed for learners K-8 (Afflerbach, P. (2008)). This series allows students to work on their reading and literature understandings as a class, small groups or even one on one. While incorporating technology to engage and allow students to virtually interact with the program.

This series gives students a weekly story, question of the week, vocabulary, song, and “grammar jammer” which all are to be discussed as a class and than worked on through the *Reading Street* online program. When using this program each week there are a variety of multimedia resources to go with the specific story the class is reading. There is a “concept talk video” to get students minds thinking about the question of the week. This series also includes catchy songs of the week, which elaborate more on the specific target of the week. Along with this there is a “grammar jammer” video that hits on verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs and so on depending on what the story is based around. In fact *Reading Street* incorporates a variety of games into its series, which can be used to quiz students on their comprehension of vocabulary words and much more!

During my time within the school system I have seen that students become very excited for the reading series due to the variety of engaging activities that are readily available to them. Not only can this series be accessed at school but parents are given a log in and password so that they can access the information at home! This helps keep teachers, parents and students all on the same page in terms of knowing what exactly their child is working on at a specific time.

This is just one example of how technology has and can be incorporated into students learning. Unfortunately, textbooks as well as multimedia sources are not all free and due to this they might not be readily available to all. However there are great deals of tools out there that can be freely available to educators or at a low cost. A great deal of these Internet sources just need a school email to access them or have reduced rates for educators.

Another great multimedia resource to use in an elementary classroom is a website called Starfall. This online site has resources from math to reading that students are able to interact with to work on their basic skills and understandings from the classroom as well as at home (Starfall). A great deal of this site is freely available, however, there are some resources that are unavailable unless an account is set up and they are paid for.

Starfall is a site where students can explore their abc’s, sing along with catchy tones, work on basic math facts and so much more! It’s a fun way for students to learn with just the click of a mouse, touch of a keyboard or push of an Ipad button. Tools such as Starfall allow students to step outside the pencil and paper skills and work on their ability to practice their typing skills, their ability to add and subtract in their head as well as to learn in a unique way.

Another engaging site for young students is a website called Kerpoof powered and produced by Disney (Kerpoof). This site allows students to create images using provided backgrounds, sceneries and so on so that students can create and develop a story! It also is a great tool to use for novel summaries. Students can first create a First, Next, Than, Finally scene which demonstrates the different sections of a story or novel in which they just read. After creating the students can add in text to explain their summary! Kerpoof also has a section where students can type words in to practice spelling or vocabulary. Once the student has spelled the word correctly an image of the word comes up so students can create scenes around the different words in which they are practicing.

Students no longer are limited to creating projects on poster boards or trifold boards. Instead, they can use the great advances in technology to create presentations, movies, videos and so much more. They are able to use resources like iMovie on Mac computers, IPad's or laptops the software is automatically installed when Mac products are purchased. They can use moviemaker on dell’s and other PC computers. These programs allow students to share and create in a fun and unique way!

No longer are presentations just created by PowerPoint, which is a software, installed in both Mac and PC’s. Now students can use Internet sites such as Animoto or Google Presentation to create and share presentations virtually anywhere. These tools are accessible at the touch of a button from a computer anywhere.

Students no longer need to learn from only reading textbooks. Instead, they can take the content they learn in their reading and now see it in real life with the use of Skype, Google Hangout, ooVoo and so many more camera and Internet based real-life, real-time video capabilities. Students can now explore the town, state, country or nation they are learning about through video chatting with another student from that location. This teaches students that what they are reading is truly how it is! It allows students to explore a new location that they may never get to see in real life. It opens up new doors to the understandings in which students have.

Due to the great advances in technology in society today the classroom has become a place for students to grow and learn in a whole new way! Multimedia resources allow children at a young age to step into a digital world where opportunities seem endless. These resources allow students to explore, create, expand and share their understandings in a variety of ways! No longer are students sitting behind a desk using a pencil and paper to share their imagination. Now they are able to use great tools such as computers, laptops, IPad's, IPod’s, Cameras, Video Cameras and so on to create projects and presentations to not only share with their peers and teachers but with other’s around the world.

Afflerbach, P. (2008). *Reading Street*. Glenview, Ill.: Pearson Scott Foresman.

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